BIRTHPLACE
FARM AND CABIN

DRAWER 11

BIRTHPLACE CABIN

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Kentucky

Birthplace Cabin

Birthplace Farm and Cabin

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

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LINCOLN LORE

No. 134 FORT WAYNE, INDIANA November 2, 1931

LINCOLN LORE

BULLETIN OF THE LINCOLN HISTORICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

ENDOWED BY THE LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

Dr. Louis A. Warren - - - Editor

THE EVERLASTING SPRINGS OF THE LINCOLNS

The most valuable prizes for which primitive man fought in the early struggle for survival, were the "Springs of Water." Near these natural fountains, so necessary for the well-being of the family, they built their first camps. Down through the centuries the frontiersman, when seeking a place for his wilderness home, has been influenced by the availability of good water. It is evident in the development of the western country that arid claims with excellent springs were usually chosen in preference to the more fertile acres with a limited water supply. Centers of population soon grew up around many of these spring sites.

The everlasting springs have become the natural memorials which mark the abiding places of our ancestors. Imposing shrines have been erected to designate sites of historic importance, but often nature has established more enduring monuments to mark the spots where illustrious men have lived and died. The several homes of the Lincolns in Kentucky are marked by everlasting springs and regardless of man's efforts to honor the Emancipator and his people, nature has taken care that the sites of their cabin homes shall not be forgotten.

An old chinquapin tree standing in the very northeast corner of Jefferson County, Kentucky, seeks its nourishment from the spring that furnished water for the first Lincoln cabin in the great Wilderness. The constant cultivation of the field in which this spring is located has caused the walls, which formerly enclosed it, to collapse, but a small cairn just above the place where the water oozes out of the earth, has been erected by visitors from the stones that once composed the small spring house. It was close by this spring that Abraham Lincoln, the pioneer grandfather of President Lincoln, was killed by the Indians in the month of May, 1786.

The widow Lincoln and her five orphan children soon moved to what is now Washington County, Kentucky. Here in the Beech Fork community all five of her children were married. The last of the five wedding ceremonies to be celebrated was the marriage of the youngest son, Thomas Lincoln, to Nancy Hanks, who was living in the home of her cousin and guardian, Richard Berry, where the wedding took place. This cabin stood by a generous flow of water which for many years has been known as the Lincoln Spring. The original cabin has been moved away, but nature's memorial still remains. Here other youths of the community may pledge their love and plight their faith with cups of cool spring water.

Within two and a half years after the wedding in the Berry cabin, Thomas Lincoln purchased for "two hundred dollars, cash in hand paid," the three hundred acre farm in what is now Larue County, Kentucky. Undoubtedly the famous spring, close by the beginning corner of the farm survey, influenced Lincoln in the purchase of the property. In the deed which designates the boundaries of the farm at the time the Lincolns lived there, is the following clause "a certain parcel or tract of land on the waters of the South Fork of Nolin, containing three hundred acres, beginning near or at the spring called the Sinking Spring."

It is difficult to find a more picturesque spring than this one, near which Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809. After centuries of continual toil it has made its own house in a lime stone cave, seven feet high, seven feet wide, and fifteen feet long. It is overhung with the branches of a huge tree and its banks are covered with wild vines. Except for the retaining wall built just outside the cave, and the approach down a flight of stone steps, it is very much like it must have been in the days of Lincoln's infancy.

In pioneer times a much travelled trail passed by the convenient watering place and the spring became known for miles around. It was first called Sinking Spring, later Cave Spring and Rock Spring, and now Lincoln Spring.

On the back wall of this natural limestone spring house we have what may be the first attempt to memorialize Lincoln with hammer and chisel. Shortly after Lincoln's election, a person by the name of Samuel Castene, who lived in New York, stopped at the home of the Creals, then in possession of the old Lincoln Spring. Mr. Castene borrowed from Judge Creal, a boy of eight years, a hammer and chisel with which he cut in the rock on the side of the cave above the spring his initials S. C. He gave the boy a piece of money for the use of the hammer and chisel, which fact has inscribed on Judge Creal's memory, throughout his life, the name of Samuel Castene, although he never saw nor heard from him since that time. In 1865 some Northern soldiers returning from the war, stopped at the spring and noticed the large letters carved in the wall; one of them remarked that S. C. stood for Southern Confederacy. We may draw the conclusion that before the war closed, the old spring had already become the natural monument of the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln. The letters S. C. deeply cut in the rock can be seen today on the wall of the cave.

It is doubtful if nature ever marked a man's birthplace with a more enduring monument than the Rock Spring. Long after the building on the hill shall have crumbled with the coming centuries, the stream of cold water from the never failing spring will continue to force its way through the crevice in the eternal rock which marks the nativity scene of the "Man for the Ages."

One becomes so much interested in the source of the spring and the cavity made by the continual dropping of the water for many centuries, that some of the other features of the cave are overlooked.

On the topmost shelf of the cave, a pair of pewees usually makes its nest each summer. Although the increasing number of guests who annually visit the spring make it difficult for them to carry out their feeding program for the fledglings, they continue to build their nest in the old cave where generations of their parents have built before them. One is bound to recall the incident related by the Kentucky friend of Lincoln, how in later years he, a man grown, spent on one occasion at least, considerable time in an effort to place some young birds back in a nest from which they had fallen.

There are not so many springs in the Indiana country which became the home of the Lincolns in 1816, and much has been said about the difficulty with which Thomas Lincoln found sufficient water for his family to drink. The scarcity of drinking water on the Lincoln farm has been greatly exaggerated. Within five hundred feet of the Lincoln cabin site there are three good wells which the present owners of the property say seldom if ever go dry. Within this same radius is a spring which old citizens remember had a considerable flow in the early days. An experienced frontiersman like Thomas Lincoln would not make the mistake of purchasing a tract of land without drinking water close by the site where he intended to build his cabin. Since the building of the railroad station, nearby, the old spring has been walled in and a concrete top placed over it.

These natural memorials in Kentucky and Indiana, which mark the home sites of the Lincolns, are after all the best markers for the cabin sites as no pioneer lived very far away from an everlasting spring.

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor.
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

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LINCOLN LOG CABINS

A great world's fair in America would be incomplete without one or more Lincoln cabins on display. Although there is no original home of the Lincolns being shown at the Century of Progress Exposition, there are several replicas of buildings associated with the life of the president. The opening of the exhibition invites a brief review of the Lincoln cabins which have become famous by having often been reproduced in replica and made familiar by photographic copies.

Cabins Occupied by Abraham Lincoln

Lincoln Birthplace Cabin

The most famous of all the Lincoln log cabins is the one preserved in the memorial building at Hodgenville, Kentucky. It is doubtful if any other birthplace home in the country has become so universally known and recognized by all classes of people as has the log cabin in which Abraham Lincoln was born.

The itinerary of this cabin was a long one and its removal from place to place began shortly after Lincoln was elected to the presidency. An admirer of Lincoln living about one mile north of the birthplace farm acquired the famous cabin early in the sixties and moved it to his own farm property where it served for a time as a school house. Someone saw the show value of the old pile of logs, purchased it, and exhibited it at the Tennessee Centennial at Nashville in 1894. Central Park, New York, was the next site chosen for its reconstruction and the one hundred and forty-three logs, properly marked and numbered, were assembled there.

The preliminary announcements and illustrative data with reference to the Lincoln cabin exhibited at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis is rather confusing if an identification is attempted from the sources available. One press report states it was "the cabin in which Abraham Lincoln was born"; another version of the story represents it as being "the old log cabin he lived in when a child from 1813 to 1816," and an illustrated publication of the fair shows a likeness of the Coles County, Illinois, cabin as the one being exhibited.

We next find the Lincoln cabin stored away in Stamford, Connecticut, after having made an extensive itinerary about the country. While in storage it was acquired by the Lincoln Farm Association and removed to New York for safer storage facilities.

On Wednesday, June 6, 1906, it began its famous trip back to Kentucky to be the feature attraction for the Kentucky Old Home Week celebration at Louisille. The Governor of the state detailed a detachment of five men from the militia to escort the cabin from New York to Kentucky. Its transportation was provided by the Pennsylvania Railroad and the car on which it was moved was beautifully decorated. At Philadelphia, Baltimore, Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Columbus, and Indianapolis it was received by the mayors of the respective cities and elaborate ceremonies were conducted at each place. Upon arrival at Louisville a program was arranged in its honor and it was displayed at Central Park.

After the celebration at Louisville it went into storage there until 1909 when it was shipped to Hodgenville and placed on the original site for the centennial celebration of Lincoln's birth at which time the cornerstone of the memorial building was laid. Back to Louisville it went after the celebration to go into storage again and it remained there until 1911 when it was finally rebuilt within the Lincoln Memorial Building on the birthplace farm where it will remain until it crumbles away.

The Lincoln Childhood Cabin

Abraham Lincoln's second home was a cabin on Knob Creek about ten miles north of the birthplace cabin. The Lincolns occupied this cabin from 1811 to 1816. In 1895 a correspondent of a newspaper wrote about the Knob Creek cabin as follows: "Nothing is left of the old cabin but part of the great stone fireplace. A number of the logs that made up the poor home have been used by Charles Rapier, the present owner of the farm, in building a stable."

The Cabin of Lincoln's Youth

Many confusing stories are in circulation about the disposition of the cabin occupied by the Lincoln's in Indiana. Very fortunately several pictures of the cabin were taken while it was still standing. It was sold by the owners of the Lincoln farm in 1871 and at that time still occupied the original site. There seems to be no dependable evidence as to just what became of this old cabin after it was taken down by a man in Evansville who had purchased it.

The Macon County, Illinois Cabin

This is the last of the cabin homes in which Abraham Lincoln lived with his people, and he resided in it but a very short time. This cabin, more often associated with John Hanks who helped to build it, had an extensive itinerary arranged for it. It was exhibited on Boston Common from July 15 to September 9, 1865, and at Barnum's Museum, New York City, from September 18 until the last of October, the same year. It is said to have been lost at sea while enroute to England.

Cabins Associated with Lincoln's Father

The Lincoln Marriage Cabin

Many Washington County, Kentucky, citizens still believe that Abraham Lincoln was born in the same cabin in which his parents were married, although the residence of the Lincolns in Hardin County in 1809 is established by documents. The cabin in which Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were married is now enshrined in a memorial building at Harrodsburg, Kentucky, at least twenty miles from its original site. It is known as the Lincoln marriage cabin.

The Sarah Johnston Cabin

Many of the early biographies show the picture of a tumble down log shed on Race Street in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, as the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln. The Lincoln's never occupied this cabin but it was the home of the widow Johnston previous to her marriage to Thomas Lincoln in 1819. What became of this cabin we do not know although one old citizen says it was shipped away for exhibition purposes.

The Coles County, Illinois Cabin

This cabin of Thomas Lincoln so often confused with the cabin homes of Abraham Lincoln was brought to Chicago by the Abraham Lincoln Log Cabin Association for exhibition at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. It was rebuilt in the north annex of the old Exposition Building on the lake front.

Many years ago the following notice appeared in a Chicago paper:

"Personal—Public notice is hereby given to owners and others who may claim an interest in the 'Abraham Lincoln cabin' to remove the same from the premises of Libby Prison War Museum, on Wabash Ave., or it will be sold to pay charges or donated to some historical or other society." According to Mr. Gunther this was the Coles County cabin. Part of it at least was destroyed along with Uncle Tom's Cabin which was stored with it.

CENTURY OF PROGRESS

Replicas of Buildings Associated with Lincoln

Birthplace cabin

Indiana cabin

New Salem Store

Rutledge Tavern

Room in Springfield Home

Chicago Wigwam
Lincoln Group next to Fort Dearborn

Indiana cabin
Horticultural Exhibit

New Salem Store
Food Exhibit

Room in Springfield Home
Illinois Host Building

LINCOLN LORE

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THE BIRTHPLACE CABIN OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The story of Abraham Lincoln's nativity, as it is usually presented, has contributed much to the legendary aspects of the folk lore which has grown up with reference to his early years. The surroundings of the Lincoln's Kentucky cabin and a stable in Bethlehem of Judea have often been described with striking similarity. No dwelling place in all the world is more quickly associated with a historical character than the house of logs which has been used in many lands as a symbol of opportunity.

While it is admitted that Lincoln was born in a one-room log cabin withdrawn from the centers of population, it is equally true that the home was no more humble than the birthplaces of thousands of boys who helped to shape the destinies of the new nation. In fact this Lincoln birthplace cabin might be exhibited as a typical pioneer residence at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century.

The occupants of this abode have been done a great injustice when set apart as the riffraff of the western frontier. They were no more illiterate than the vast majority of brave people who first settled in the wilderness. It is true that they were subjected to the privations of both body and mind that all the pioneers suffered, but these parents gave to Abraham Lincoln a home environment as helpful and wholesome as that enjoyed by the average pioneer boy.

The cabin originally stood on a tract of land which Thomas Lincoln had purchased from William Bush in 1808. It was not situated on a squatters domain as has often been alleged. The Lincoln land was in that part of Hardin County, Kentucky, that later became LaRue County. The home place was three miles south of Hodgen's Mill, around which mill the town of Hodgenville was later to spring up. The immediate site of the cabin was near-by a spring called Sinking Spring. It faced west on the old Cumberland Road which passed directly in front of the cabin.

It is likely that the cabin was already standing on the farm when Thomas Lincoln bought it. If he had built a new cabin upon the land he would have been more reluctant to leave it two years later and move to another farm on the same road eight miles north of the birthplace location. Of this fact we are certain, Abraham Lincoln lived in the cabin in which he was born but two years.

While land transactions indicate that there were improvements on the Lincoln farm after the Lincoln's removal, it was not until 1852 that a direct reference was made to a dwelling on the property. A deed made at this time referred to "the spring where the said Horne now lives." Eight different owners had been in possession of the farm and cabin after the Lincoln's left and previous to the purchase by Horne.

The first person to take an interest in preserving the old cabin was Dr. George Rodman, a practicing physician and an admirer of Lincoln, who owned property one mile north of the Lincoln farm. Some time after Lincoln's election to the presidency, after paying a visit to Lincoln in Washington, Rodman purchased the birthplace cabin of the President from Richard Creal and had it moved to his own farm.

The next individual who showed an interest in the cabin was A. W. Denette, of New York, who purchased the cabin from John Davenport, then the owner of the Rodman property. Denette also purchased that part of the original Lincoln farm containing the famous spring and old home site. He moved the cabin back to the farm, but rebuilt it on an elevation just back of where it stood at the time of Lincoln's birth.

The cabin was destined to occupy this site but a short time before being removed by Denette for exhibition purposes and it was shown at many different points throughout the country, including the Nashville Centennial in 1894 and at the Buffalo Exposition as late as 1901. When Denette started to move the cabin from place to place, he had each of the one hundred and forty-three logs numbered, so that they might be put together correctly with each log in its place. After its long exhibition itinerary it was acquired by David Creer and stored in the old Poffenhausen mansion on Long Island.

The Lincoln Farm Association acquired possession of the cabin in 1906, and it was shipped to Louisville, Kentucky, the same year, where it was exhibited at the Louisville Home Coming celebration. It was then put in storage in the city until 1909 when it was shipped to Hodgenville and reconstructed for the exercises arranged in honor of the one hundredth anniversary of Lincoln's birth. At this time there was laid the cornerstone of the structure which was especially designed to house the cabin. After the ceremonies the logs were returned to Louisville.

The building planned to enclose the cabin was erected on the elevation where Denette placed the rebuilt cabin in 1894. When the memorial building was completed in 1911, the cabin was reconstructed within its walls, where it has since remained.

Exposed to the elements for many years and subject to hard usage with being moved about the country, it is reasonable to expect that much replacing of logs would be necessary. This does not account, however, for the mutilation of the cabin which took place after it had been preserved for a hundred years.

The foundation prepared for the cabin, when it stood on the Rodman farm, and which now supports a frame building, measures eighteen by sixteen feet. This was the usual size of a one-room log cabin in those days and this was undoubtedly the size of the original Lincoln cabin. As now reconstructed within the memorial building, however, it measures but seventeen by thirteen feet. The loss of one foot in frontage can be accounted for by the squaring off of the ends of the logs which had deteriorated but the loss of three feet in the width of the structure was evidently a mutilation of a different character.

It is greatly to be regretted that the cabin now preserved at the Lincoln Birthplace Farm near Hodgenville leaves the impression that the home occupied by the Lincolns was inferior to other pioneer dwellings, and it further contributes to the unwarranted conclusion that the family lived under more unfavorable circumstances than their neighbors. The surroundings of Abraham Lincoln at birth did not differ in any respect from the conditions existing in thousands of pioneer cabins on the frontier in the year 1809.

LINCOLN LORE

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A CABIN OF UNIVERSAL FAME

The log cabin in which Abraham Lincoln was born has become the best known home in all the universe. No structure where a man of any nation has dwelt is more quickly recognized by people the world around than the house of logs in which Abraham Lincoln first saw the light of day.

On February 12, 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt visited the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln in order to take part in a program which launched the project looking to the preservation of the Lincoln cabin. On June 14, 1936, President Franklin Roosevelt made a journey to the same place, not to deliver an address, but to visit the humble cabin much as a private citizen to gain inspiration at the shrine. Year by year outstanding world citizens from many nations make the pilgrimage to the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln.

The original Lincoln cabin itself ence went on a lengthy itinerary, having been shown at the Tennessee Centennial at Nashville, Tennessee, and in many of the large cities of the country. On the one hundredth anniversary of Lincoln's birth in 1909, it was returned to its original site. As the cabin is no longer available for exhibition purposes the next best method of allowing the general public to get a glimpse of what the birthplace of Lincoln was like is to construct replicas of it. Many of these have been erected throughout the country and even Denmark has built a Lincoln cabin in one of her parks. In 1920 The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company erected a replica of the cabin in Foster Park at Fort Wayne, Indiana. Three years later Miss Mary Bowditch Forbes built a Lincoln cabin on her estate at Milton, Massachusetts. Both of these log houses are built to the exact specifications of the Hodgenville cabin now preserved in the beautiful memorial structure there.

The Fort Wayne Lincoln cabin has recently been rebuilt in a more favorable location near the entrance of Foster Park. It is surrounded on three sides by a typical pioneer rail fence and the landscaping has been arranged to harmonize with a cabin home. The furnishings for the cabin were obtained in Kentucky in the county where Abraham Lincoln was born.

Many requests have come to the Lincoln National Life Foundation from Boy Scout Troops and other organizations for information which would be helpful in building a replica of the cabin. This issue of Lincoln Lore presents sufficient instructions for the building of an accurate replica of the Lincoln cabin.

Foundation

Field stones were used under the foundation logs although sometimes large stones supporting the four corners of the cabin and the four corners of the chimney were all that were required.

General Plan

The cabin is 17 ft. x 13 ft., outside measurements, with a door 5 ft. 8 in. by 2 ft. 8 in. and a window 2 ft. square in the front wall of the structure. On the left side wall is an opening for the fireplace and a log and stick chimney 6 ft. 6 in. wide and 3 ft. 11 in. deep. The back and right walls of the cabin are without openings.

Front Wall

The front wall is eleven logs high to the eaves. To make room for door and windows several logs of different lengths are necessary. Log Measurements follow:

1 log .....19 ft.
4 logs .....17 ft.
6 logs .....7 ft. 7 in.
4 logs .....6 ft. 9 in.
2 logs .....3 ft.
2 logs .....1 ft. 9 in.
Door casing, overall....2 ft. 8 in. wide
5 ft. 8 in. high
Window casing, overall...2 ft. square

Right Side Wall

The right side wall is ten logs high including the long eave log. Above the eave are three more logs which complete the gable. Log Measurements follow:

1 log .....15 ft.
9 logs .....13 ft.
1 log .....9 ft. 6 in.
1 log .....5 ft. 6 in.
1 log .....2 ft. 6 in.

Back Wall

The back wall is plain with all logs the same length except the eave log which extends out on each end 12 inches beyond the rest of the back logs. Log Measurements follow:

1 log .....19 ft.
10 logs .....17 ft.

Left Side Wall

The fireplace is cut out of the left wall. The sixth log directly over the fireplace is the first one to extend the full length of the side wall. There are four more full length logs including the eave log and three shorter ones in the gable. Log Measurements follow:

1 log .....15 ft.
4 logs .....13 ft.
5 logs .....4 ft. 3 in.
1 log .....9 ft. 6 in.
1 log .....5 ft. 6 in.
1 log .....2 ft. 6 in.

Chimney

The chimney against the left wall is five logs high in back and six logs high on each side. On top of these logs smaller sticks are used to build the chimney tapering off until they reach the height of the ninth side log of the cabin. (The chimney may be extended to the roof.) Log Measurements follow:

12 logs .....4 ft. 10 in.
5 logs .....6 ft. 6 in.
30 sticks from ...6 ft. 6 in. to 3 ft. 3 in.

Roof

The roof consists of five poles besides the two eave logs of the walls, and on these, three courses of hand made singles are placed. These shingles are held on by an extra ridge pole and three more poles extending across the roof where the courses of shingles join. Pole Measurements follow:

12 poles .....19 ft. long
Sufficient hand made shingles for 3 courses on each side of roof.

Picture Available

The Lincoln National Life Foundation will be pleased to furnish a picture of the cabin to any group which anticipates building a replica.

LINCOLN LORE

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Number 1016 FORT WAYNE, INDIANA September 27, 1948

THE AUTHENTICITY OF LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE CABIN

THE JACOB S. BROTHERS TRADITION

Mr. Roy Hays, an honored member of the Detroit Lincoln Fellowship, has spent many years of intensive research on the traditional birthplace cabins of Abraham Lincoln. His efforts are now summarized in the September 1948 issue of the Abraham Lincoln Quarterly under the caption, "Is the Lincoln Birthplace Cabin Authentic?" The cabin in question refers to the one enshrined in the memorial building at Hodgenville, Kentucky.

Mr. Hays virtually answers the question he has raised by stating on the very first page of his monograph that, "The original cabin was torn down prior to 1840." He further invalidates any claim of authenticity made on behalf of the present structure standing at Hodgenville by observing that when the genuine cabin was razed before 1840 the logs were burned. Without submitting further evidence to support his premise, the author in a single paragraph of but sixty-five words apparently closes the argument.

We are happy, however, that Mr. Hays did not conclude his monograph at this point. If so, we would have missed the intensely interesting story of the meanders over the country of a certain log cabin which, supplemented by fragments of other dwellings, finally found a haven in the Lincoln Memorial on the birthplace farm in Kentucky.

However, because of such limited space available, this issue of Lincoln Lore cannot furnish room to extend the review of Mr. Hays' evidence beyond the burned cabin paragraph and the Rowbotham comments which follow it. In some subsequent issue attention will be called to that part of Mr. Hays' carefully annotated manuscript developing another supposition. It reveals an immense amount of original research and a tenacity on the part of the author to follow through, a trait many writers of history fail to acquire.

Lincoln students for a period of nearly forty years have been aware of the "burned cabin" tradition originating with Jacob S. Brothers and published in 1909 by J. T. Hobson in his book entitled *The Footsteps of Abraham Lincoln.* Hoping to clarify the tradition, more than twenty years ago the editor of Lincoln Lore visited the widow of Mr. Hobson and purchased from her such miscellaneous Lincoln papers, which had formerly belonged to her husband, as were then in her possession. The papers threw no further light on the Brothers tradition.

Hobson first interviewed Brothers on March 30, 1899, and learned that he once lived on the Lincoln farm in Kentucky. Four and a half years later on September 8, 1903, Hobson again interviewed Brothers and states, "At my request he gave a fuller statement which I wrote out and then read it to him, all of which he said was correct." At the time of this interview Brothers was eighty-four years of age and was trying to recall events which had occurred in another state seventy-six years before. It is the testimony of this lone witness that Mr. Hays depends upon when he makes the unqualified affirmation that the genuine Lincoln birthplace cabin burned before 1840.

Jacob Brothers stated in his 1903 interview: "In the year 1827 when I was eight years old, my father purchased the old farm on which Abraham Lincoln was born." This date is shown by duly authorized records to be in error. In 1827 the farm was in possession of Henry Thomas who had acquired the property from George Burkhart on January 28, 1824. On October 14, 1830, Henry Thomas sold the farm to John J. Gash, and Gash conveyed the title bond by endorsement to Henry Brothers on the second day of April 1835. On March 25, 1840, John J. Gash, the same assignee who sold the property to Brothers, reassigned it to Charles Huss. Affidavits in litigation proceedings reveal that "Brothers could not pay the purchase money", and that "it would cost $20 to defend the suit" which he could not secure, and furthemore stated that he "would not defend it." Mr. Hays admits that the farm was in possession of Brothers but five years, from 1835 to 1840.

The reminiscences of Jacob Brothers are further recorded as follows: "We lived in the house in which Lincoln was born. After some years, my father built another house almost like the first house. The old house was torn down, and, to my knowledge, the logs were burned for fire wood. Later he built a hewed log house."

We have here the story of a poor family, that could not pay for the land on which they lived, or raise $20 to defend a title to it. Nevertheless, within a period of five years they built a new home similar to the one in which they were living and then constructed within this same five years period still another better cabin. This probably is too much cabin building for so short a period, when the average pioneer family lived in a cabin for a generation, at least, and often for a lifetime.

If Jacob Brothers, as he states, went to live in a log cabin which his father purchased in 1827 when he, Jacob, was eight years old; if it was this same cabin, as he affirms, which was used for firewood; then it could not have been the Lincoln birthplace cabin that was burned, but another structure. Jacob was sixteen years old before his father acquired possession of the birthplace cabin. But now instead of a phantom cabin, we have in its place as many as two other cabins on the birthplace farm to account for.

During the 1903 interview with Brothers, Hobson quotes him as saying, "The pictures we often see of the house in which Lincoln was born are the pictures of the first house built by my father." If any deductions of historical value can be drawn from Brothers' reminiscences, Lincoln students should get some satisfaction at least to learn that Brothers could identify the then publicised cabin, which he claimed was constructed similar to the one in which Lincoln was born. The picture of the traditional birthplace cabin mentioned by Brothers shows it to be a hewed log structure but the implication of Brothers' testimony would indicate that the third and last cabin which his father built was the first "hewed log house" constructed and so the confusion continues.

Mr. Hays in the paragraph following his brief discussion on the burning of the traditional birthplace cabin makes this comment, "It is not necessary for us to rely entirely on the statement of elderly Jacob Brothers as to the fact that the original cabin disappeared before Lincoln became a national figure." Hays then refers to an engraving and a letter by John B. Rowbotham, who visited the Lincoln Farm in the spring of 1865 and found no cabin there.

Lincoln became a "national figure" as early as 1860 and it is difficult to figure out how the absence of a cabin on the Lincoln farm in 1865 supports Brothers' statement that the original authentic cabin was burned before 1840. It is also illogical to conclude, that because there was no cabin there in 1865, there was no cabin there during the interval from 1840 to 1864. As far as we know none of the traditions relating to the removal of a certain log cabin from the Lincoln farm to the Rodman farm, place the removal later than 1861.

Admitting the fraility of memory, it does not appear that the reminiscences of a man eighty-four years old, which try to recreate events which occurred seventy-six years before, should be looked upon as infallible.

LINCOLN LORE

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THE AUTHENTICITY OF LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE CABIN

The John A. Davenport Tradition

The contribution of Roy Hays entitled, "Is the Lincoln Birthplace Cabin Authentic?" published in the *Abraham Lincoln Quarterly* for September, 1948, presents two independent traditions bearing on the question. The story which claims that the birthplace cabin was destroyed by fire some time previous to 1840 is accepted by Mr. Hays as factual. This point of view was discussed in the issue of Lincoln Lore for September 27, 1948.

The other tradition which Mr. Hays considers, holds that a log house sold by John A. Davenport to Alfred W. Dennett in 1895 contained logs that were originally in the Lincoln birthplace cabin of 1809. Mr. Hays does not accept the Davenport cabin as having been directly associated with the structure in which Lincoln was born. He affirms that the cabin enshrined in the memorial building at Hodgenville is not authentic.

The greater part of Mr. Hays' monograph deals with the history of the Davenport cabin as it was moved from place to place after it was acquired by Dennett. This is an intensely human interest story and well told, but it seems irrelevant to the major question of authenticity raised by Mr. Hays. The question of identification narrows down to this query; were any of the logs used in the reconstruction of the cabin acquired by Dennett originally a part of the cabin in which Lincoln was born?

The authenticity of the Davenport cabin was challenged as early as 1896 by Clifton M. Nichols in his book entitled *Life of Abraham Lincoln.* Under a picture of the rebuilt Davenport cabin appearing on page 18 he states with reference to the original birthplace cabin, "The humble cabin was torn down, and the materials used in its construction were utilized otherwise and untimately destroyed. . . . A more pretentious residence was built upon the site but it too was built of logs. At a later period the new house was torn down. . . . The logs used in the vacated dwelling were sold to a neighbor and a portion of them remain at the present time in a dwelling occupied by John A. Davenport, and located about a mile from the old Lincoln homestead. . . . The present cabin (erected by Dennett) is only a clever imitation, of the original, built on the same plan, and with the logs obtained from a very old, decaying house on an adjoining farm."

The Lincoln Farm Association after acquiring the cabin also examined evidence with reference to the authenticity of the logs they had acquired. There was much doubt expressed at that time about the genuineness of the structure. The favorable reaction to the evidence submitted, caused such historians as Prof. Albert B. Hart of Hart, Professor George B. Adams of Yale, Professor Frederick J. Turner of Wisconsin, and Miss Ida M. Tarbell, famous author, to put their stamp of approval on the birthplace cabin.

When the editor of Lincoln Lore wrote his book entitled *Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood,* published in 1926, he raised the question about the authenticity of the cabin then enshrined in the Memorial and came to this conclusion, "Tradition alone can answer the question and it gives both a positive and a negative answer." He did discover that the cabin had been mutilated and cut down from the former dimensions of 16 x 18 feet to 12 x 17 feet.

At the time the Department of the Interior took over the cabin from the War Department, under whose supervision it was placed when first acquired, the question was brought up about the authenticity of the cabin. The conclusions appear in the department's publication *The Abraham Lincoln National Historical Park,* as follows: "The log cabin in the Memorial Building is the traditional birthplace cabin. It is impossible to say with certainty that it is the original cabin. . . . Its history prior to 1861 is a matter of controversy and doubt."

The "controversy and doubt" arises partly from the fact that there was a log cabin building standing on the birthplace farm in Kentucky in 1860 at the time Lincoln was nominated for the Presidency, but removed some time before his assassination in 1865. Also, there may have been while Lincoln was President a cabin still standing on the Knob Creek farm where the boy was taken to live when but two years of age. This second early home would also add to the confusion of those attempting to identify the original birthplace cabin.

A correspondent to the *Missouri Telegraph* who was designated as "a young lady from LaRue County" stated in the issue of November 23, 1860, "The Lincoln farm is old and well worn. In an old field near a running brook the ruins of a pioneer cabin are pointed out as the birthplace of the President-elect."

Dr. Robert H. Brown, author of a two volume history entitled *Abraham Lincoln and Men of His Time,* visited the Lincoln country in 1862 or 1863 and tells of his visit to the Lincoln country. He mentions a log cabin then unoccupied standing on the Lincoln Farm on "Nolin Creek."

Robert Harvey, Company D 74th, in the *Nebraska State Journal* for February 11, 1909, writes: "I saw the rude log cabin in which Lincoln was born, in October, 1862. It was a few days after the battle of Perryville, Kentucky, when in the early afternoon we approached a low one story cabin on our left. A rail fence ran along in front and on one corner was stuck a cracker box lid on which was chalked, 'Birthplace of President Lincoln.' The chimney was at the end of the building we were approaching, and was built of splints or sticks and daubed with mud. The roof was of clapboards and held in place by poles laid lengthwise. . . . There was a door and a square window on the side facing the road and some of the logs had the appearance of being much decayed. A pear tree stood at the farther end of the building, but its uninviting fruit remained unmolested."

The traditions gathered by Mr. Hays and those presented here seem to support this conclusion: There was a log building standing on the birthplace farm in 1860 which was removed before 1865 to property later acquired by John Davenport: He sold in 1895 the building reconstructed from the birthplace logs to Alfred W. Dennett. However, the affidavits and written testimonials of those who have attempted to associate the birthplace cabin, with the logs removed from the farm in 1860, are in irreconciliable confusion. The birthplace log cabin is variously described by these affiants as round, hewed, low one story, two story, new, decayed. From one to three cabins are said to have stood at intervals on the same spot. The logs of one are supposed to have been used to rebuild a subsequent structure, another tradition suggests the original logs were used for an unknown purpose, and in a third instance, it is claimed they were burned.

Mr. Roy Hays has presented a most valuable discussion on the traditional first home of Abraham Lincoln and one would have much difficulty in the light of the evidence he has unearthed to support the authenticity of even the thirteen Davenport logs in the present traditional structure. Unless one forces himself to accept the Jacob S. Brothers' tradition about the burning of the logs, he may still be engulfed by the atmosphere of "controversy and doubt" in his attempt to pass on the authenticity of Lincoln's Birthplace Cabin.

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Foundation - - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

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EARLY VISITORS AT LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE CABIN

Those who have visited the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln memorialized by an impressive national shrine located near Hodgenville, Kentucky, can testify to the significance of its inspirational values. There is a sincere desire among Lincoln students that this memorial of Lincoln's humble origin may not become impaired by an atmosphere of suspicion. In recent months there has been created, by a direct attack on the genuineness of the cabin, an undercurrent of skepticism which has greatly diminished the favorable influence the cabin has exerted for nearly half a century.

There has always been an acknowledgment on the part of Lincoln authors as well as the government agencies in charge of the memorial that positive identification of the cabin at this late date could not be established. However, this admission does not imply that it can be proven the cabin is spurious, and until such positive evidence is available it is unjust and almost sacrilegious to discredit this relic which has brought impressive sensations to thousands of children, women, and grown men as well.

It is of some interest to inquire who were the earliest visitors to the cabin which stood close by the Sinking Spring at the time Abraham Lincoln was elected to the Presidency. Abraham Lincoln's election to Congress in 1846 may have been of sufficient importance to cause his birthplace to be identified, but apparently Lincoln himself did not so conclude. He wrote two letters in 1848 to relatives in the east about his family connections but did not even mention his own birthplace. His father was still living but there is no evidence Abraham talked with him about it. Lincoln's name being placed before the Republican convention at Baltimore as a candidate for the vice presidential nomination probably did not excite enough interest to invite people to inquire about his birthplace.

Most likely it was not until 1858 that there would be any interest in identifying the place where Abraham Lincoln was born. Two contributing factors that year might prompt the people of Hardin County to try and discover the site. At the request of the compiler of the *Dictionary of Congress*, Lincoln prepared a brief notation which mentioned he was born "in Hardin County, Kentucky." It was also in 1858 that Lincoln was brought before the public eye by his debates with Douglas and no doubt many times he was asked about the place of his birth.

The following year 1859 at the request of Jesse W. Fell, Lincoln prepared a brief autobiographical sketch in which he mentioned that he was born "in Hardin County, Kentucky." It was not until 1860 that he became more specific about his birthplace. In another sketch he prepared for John Locke Scripps he stated that he was born "then in Hardin, now in the more recently formed county of Larue." For Thomas Hicks, the artist, however, he prepared the most extended statement about this birthplace: He said he was born "in then Hardin County, at a point within the now recently formed county of Larue, a mile, or a mile and a half, from where Hodgensville (sic) now is, my parents being dead and my own memory not serving. I know no means of identifying the precise locality."

There had already appeared a tradition which claimed that Lincoln was born at Elizabethtown, Kentucky, but the President-elect wrote to Samuel Haycraft in May 1860: "I was not born at Elizabethtown but my mother's first child, a daughter, two years older than myself, and now long since deceased, was. I was born Feb. 12, 1809 near where Hogginsville (sic) now is, then in Hardin county." Another tradition immediately was put in circulation that he was born in a cabin on Knob Creek and many of the early visitors who observed the old cabin there in which Abraham's brother Thomas was born felt they had visited the birthplace of the President.

Certainly shortly after Lincoln's nomination to the Presidency the few old citizens who lived in the birthplace community and who remembered the Lincolns would visit the old Lincoln cabin which stood by the spring. We have testimonies of several elderly people who claimed to have gone to the cabin about the time of his nomination or election in 1860. Richard Creal, then the owner of the Lincoln farm, would probably be the first to recognize the significance of the old cabin on their place which was then unoccupied.

When the Civil War broke in 1861 and Lincoln became commander-in-chief of the armies of the Republic the President's birthplace would be a spot of special interest to the Union soldiers who moved over the highway leading from Louisville to Nashville by Bardstown. There must have been hundreds of soldiers who saw the old cabin.

Excerpts from a letter written by one of these soldiers, D. McArthur, a member of Company E 19th Illinois Infantry, in which he tells about his visit to the farm in the late fall of 1861 are of sufficient interest to present in this bulletin. The location of the cabin clearly identifies with the spot where Abraham Lincoln was born.

"Our next Camp was at Bacon Creek. I was then acting as a Scout and was sent to where he (Lincoln) was born. I hunted up the owner of the place, he was living on the place but not in the same cabin. I asked him if he was shure (sic) this was the cabin where the President was born. He said he was. I then asked if there had been any changes made since he got it. He said there had been very little changes made. The lower logs had rotted and he had replaced it with new ones. There had been no window in the house and he had put in a half sash window and had put flat rocks under some posts when there (sic) bottoms had rotted. Looking from the door to the left end was the fireplace which took up about ½ of the end. It was made of rocks and clay about 7 feet and split sticks and clay the rest of the way up. On the right at far side of the room was the Bedstead. It was made by putting a Post at foot of the Bed and running a pole from that pole to a space between the logs at the end of the House and another pole from that post to a space between the logs at the side of the House. Then there was split boards run from the side pole to the side of the House and another pole from the post to the end of the House and all fastened with wooden pins. There was a small bed on the other side made the same way and both beds filled with Forest leafs (sic) no Bedsticks. Part of upstairs was covered with split boards and on them 4 poles juned (sic) to the boards with wooden pins for the bed and filled in between with leaves. The stairway was a pole with 1½ inch auger holes and wooden pins drove through about a foot on each side of the pole. Some flat stones were sunk level with the ground in front of the fireplace was all the door was made of split boards with wooden hinges and a wooden latch."

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LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE FARM—"THE PRECISE LOCALITY"

When Abraham Lincoln prepared a brief sketch for the artist, Hicks on June 14, 1860, he wrote in referring to his birthplace, "I know no means of identifying the precise locality." It was not until the editor of Lincoln Lore made his documentary researches in Hardin County, Kentucky that the "precise locality" of the Lincoln farm was established by duly authorized court records.

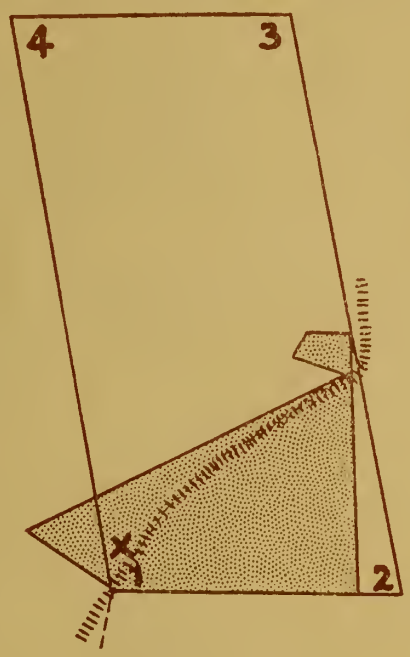
When Richard J. Collier purchased what was known as the birthplace farm in 1905, he had no assurance but tradition and folklore that the land he acquired was once in possession of Thomas Lincoln, father of the President. One newspaper account of the Collier purchase stated that "Since the birth of Lincoln on February 12, 1809, the farm has changed hands only twice. Thomas Lincoln, the father of the President, sold the land to Richard Creal about the time the family moved to Indiana in 1816." Richard Creal did not acquire the part of the Lincoln farm where the cabin stood until August 26, 1867, fifty years after the Lincolns left Kentucky. By that time the cabin tract had changed hands eleven times. Creal added this tract to a hundred acre survey he had previously acquired and after some changes in the boundary sold 110½ acres to A. W. Dennett in 1894, specifying in the deed that it was the farm on which Abraham Lincoln was born.

When the United States came in possession of the traditional birthplace farm in 1816, there was no abstract of title available which proved that the farm was once in possession of Thomas Lincoln. In fact there were those primarily interested in the project who claimed that Lincoln lived on a squatter's domain so the boundaries of any specific piece of ground surrounding the cabin were of no importance.

But Abraham Lincoln was not born on a squatter's domain. His father paid two hundred dollars "cash in hand" for a 300 acre tract on which the birthplace cabin stood. The document showing Thomas Lincoln's ownership of the land is to be found in the Hardin County Circuit Court records, a copy of which follows with the endorsements of David Vance and Isaac Bush:

MATHER TO VANCE—BOND

"Articles of agreement made this First Day of May, 1805 between Richard Mather of the County of Hardin, and State of Kentucky, and David Vance of the County and State aforesaid witnesseth that I have sold to the said David Vance a certain parcel or tract of land on the waters of the South Fork of Nolin containing 300 acres beginning near or at a spring called the Sinking Spring, to be twice as long as wide and including as much of a grove called the Little Turkey Grove, as will fall within the boundary as aforesaid and I do obligate myself to make a deed with a general warranty to the said David Vance when the said David Vance has made full payment to



BIRTHPLACE FARM

X—Site of Birthplace cabin.
1.—Beginning corner of four farms.
Numerals—Four corners of 348½ acre survey.
Road—Old Cumberland Road, Louisville to Nashville.
Shaded Portion—Tract of 110½ acres now in possession of the United States Government.

Richard Mather or his order for the aforesaid land, in witness whereof we have inter-changeably set our hands the day and year above written. Signed Richard Mather. Witnesses: John Gum, Shepherd Gum."

Endorsement. No. 1. "For value received I assign the within agreement to Isaac Bush, given under my hand and seal this 2nd Day of November, 1805. Signed David Vance. Witnesses: Ben Helm, John Miller."

Endorsement. No. 2. "For Value received I assign the within article to Thomas Lincoln. Witness my hand and seal the 12th Day of December, 1808. Signed: Isaac Bush; witness, Sam Haycraft."

It was not long after Thomas Lincoln acquired the land that it was in litigation over payments Vance had failed to make to Mather. The court decreed Thomas Lincoln should receive from William Bush the $200.00 he had paid for the land, and he moved from the premises in 1811. This tract originally in possession of Thomas Lincoln was surveyed by order of the court in 1837, and was found to contain 348½ acres instead of the designated 300. The boundaries follow:

"Beginning at a large white oak (1) 13 poles above the sinking or rock spring, running thence to a North 9½ degrees West 155 poles to a stake (2) in John Taylor's field, thence South 89½ degrees East 155 poles to a forked black jack (3), thence South 9½ degrees East 310 poles to a black jack (4), thence North 89½ degrees West 155 poles to the beginning."

The above survey was divided into several smaller tracts including one of nine acres surrounding the Lincoln cabin, which at the time designated has been in possession of the following property holders since it was first patented as part of a 30,000 acre survey:

William Geenough, February 20, 1786; John Dewhurst, June 15, 1786; William Weymouth, October 15, 1791; Joseph James, June 11, 1798; Richard Mather, December 23, 1802; David Vance, May 1, 1805; Isaac Bush, November 2, 1805; Thomas Lincoln, December 12, 1808; Benjamin Wright, Comm'r., September 12, 1816; Gabriel Kirkpatrick, December 19, 1816; John Welsh and William Duckworth, December 19, 1816; George Burkhart, July 16, 1822; Henry Thomas, January 28, 1824; John Gash, October 14, 1830; Henry Brothers, April 7, 1835; Charles F. Huss, March 25, 1840; William Huss and William J. Thomas, February 15, 1845; Henry D. Horn, September 27, 1852; R. P. Hankla, December 14, 1853; Richard Creal, August 26, 1867; Alfred W. Dennett, November 23, 1894; L. B. Hanley, Comm'r., May, 1905; R. J. Collier, August 28, 1905; Lincoln Farm Ass'n., November 9, 1907; United States of America, April 11, 1916.

The titles to the other tracts cut out of the original Thomas Lincoln 348½ acre survey have been traced through the court records so that we may say that there is now, documentary proof for what we may call "the precise location" of the Lincoln Birthplace Farm.

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BIRTHPLACE FARM TITLE

This year marks the one hundred and thirtieth anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. Nearly eighty years have now passed since the place of his nativity has been given more or less attention, and for nearly a quarter of a century the birthplace farm of the President has been a national shrine.

It was not until last month, however, that the United States government obtained documentary evidence that the farm on which the enshrined cabin now stands was actually in the possession at one time of Abraham Lincoln's father.

When the editor of Lincoln Lore first went to Hodgenville, Kentucky, to reside twenty years ago, he discovered to his amazement that the site of the Lincoln National Park was determined entirely by testimonies of old citizens whose affidavits were nothing more than a collection of folklore and tradition. The fact that Abraham Lincoln himself could not point to the precise location of his cabin birthplace contributed to the confusion.

The affidavits by old citizens of Larue County were matched by other testimonies duly authorized by people living elsewhere, which affirmed that in fourteen other cabins in as many different communities the nativity of Abraham Lincoln occurred.

Here is a list of the rival birthplaces as compiled by the editor:

Jonathan's Creek, Swain County, N. C.
Ocona Lufta, Swain County, N. C.
Caravan, Enroute to Kentucky.
Lynn Mountain, Tennessee.
Beech Fork, Washington County, Ky.
Stone House, Bourbon County, Ky.
Cabin, Thatcher's Mill, Bourbon County, Ky.
Talbott Place, Hardin County, Ky.
"Pop" Martin Place, Hardin County, Ky.
Lincoln Cabin, Elizabethtown, Ky.
Race Street, Elizabethtown, Ky.
Mill Creek, Hardin County, Ky.
Mouth of South Fork, Larue County, Ky.
Knob Creek, Larue County, Ky.
Plum Orchard, Buffalo, Larue County, Ky.

When the Abraham Lincoln Farm Association in 1916 deeded the 110½ acres of land and the Lincoln cabin and improvements to the government, there was no legal land document accompanying the papers to prove that Abraham Lincoln's father was ever in possession of the farm. One spokesman for the association plainly stated that Lincoln's father was a squatter on the land and never held possession of any specified boundaries.

The uncertainty of the location of the birthplace of Lincoln and the lack of documentary data to establish beyond a doubt the actual site of the nativity encouraged the editor of Lincoln Lore to search the public record for evidence relating to Thomas Lincoln's land holdings. When he emerged from this long period of research covering nearly ten years, he had discovered many original records which gave to the Lincoln National Park a documentary rather than a traditional background.

At the time the government acquired the Lincoln farm one newspaper stated that the property had changed hands only twice since Abraham Lincoln was born there. The fact is that the tract on which the birthplace cabin stood had changed hands eighteen times during the interval between Thomas Lincoln's residence and acquisition by the United States of America.

It was not until the Lincoln farm was recently placed under the jurisdiction of the Historic Sites Department of the National Park Service that there seemed to be any inclination to give to this important shrine a historic setting. It is through the efforts of the Historic Sites Department that the government is now in possession of photographic copies of valuable records relating to the Kentucky land holdings of Thomas Lincoln and especially to the boundaries of the birthplace farm.

It was a pleasure indeed for the editor of Lincoln Lore to spend a whole week in the month of June assisting a representative of the National Park Service to make over four hundred micro films of early land grants, deeds of conveyance, papers in law suits and other public records which deal directly with the Lincoln Farm in Kentucky. Although many of these records had been discovered by the editor more than twenty years ago and many of them had passed through one serious fire they were found in an excellent state of preservation notwithstanding the fact that some of the documents were written one hundred and fifty years ago.

The original land grant of sixty thousand acres within which the Lincoln farm was situated was photographed along with the first transfer of the half of the property made on June 15, 1786. The large boundary was then divided into two smaller tracts of fifteen thousand acres each, and after passing through several hands, further divisions were made until an eight thousand acre tract was acquired by Richard Mather.

Richard Mather sold a three hundred acre tract to David Vance and two endorsements on the article of agreement indicate the acquisition of this property first by Isaac Bush and then by Thomas Lincoln. The endorsements are as follows:

(1) For value received I assign the within agreement to Isaac Bush given under my hand and seal this 2nd day of Nov. 1805. Test. Ben Helm, John Miller, David Vance.

(2) For value received I assign the within article to Thomas Lincoln witness my hand and seal the 12th day of December 1808.
Test. Sam Haycraft Isaac Bush

While Thomas Lincoln was in possession, the land was thrown into litigation over the validity of the title, and the two hundred dollars cash which Thomas Lincoln paid for the farm as the court records disclose was probably a clear loss to him. The farm continued in litigation after it passed out of Thomas Lincoln's hands and was finally cut up into several smaller tracts.

The recording of these original records relating to the Lincoln farm is a major historical achievement in Lincolniana and will now make it possible for the United States government to trace the title of the Lincoln farm back to the original patentee.

LINCOLN LORE

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IN THE HEART OF THE NATION

The romance of historical research has been visualized by a striking coincident which occurred in stories appearing in recent issues of two well-known magazines. *The Saturday Evening Post* for August 28, 1943, under the caption "His Name was Not Forgotten," by Joel Townsley Rogers, presented a well written story on the adventures of Abraham Lincoln's grandparents in the Kentucky wilderness. The September issue of *Think*, illustrated Per Jacobsson's article, "The Future of Gold is at Stake," with a photograph of the "depository at Fort Knox, housing U. S. gold bullion reserves."

Certainly the casual reader would discover no parallel themes relating the episodes of some pioneers in the later years of the eighteenth century, with the storage of gold in the middle years of the twentieth century. The Lincoln historian, however, knows that the picture in *Think* might well have been used as a sequel illustration for the *Post* story. The underground vault in Hardin County, Kentucky, which now serves as a depository for the Nation's gold bullion reserves, is but a short distance from the spot where the pioneers prepared the burial vault for the remains of the grandmother of Abraham Lincoln.

There is an old proverb which states that "Where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also." We might assume that the proverb would have the same application to social, political, and economic groups. This conclusion would imply that Kentucky with her buried gold is the heart of the nation.

More than twenty years ago the editor of *Lincoln Lore* first visited the grave of Abraham Lincoln's grandmother in the unused cemetery where the Old Mill Creek Church once stood. Observing the growth of underbrush which almost obscured the burial grounds from the nearly impassible road, and the unkempt condition of the grandmother's grave, a nearby farmer was given a small compensation for taking care of the Lincoln-Brumfield graves until public sentiment would demand better attention for them. A few years ago the burial grounds were made into Kentucky State Park No. 17.

There is no implication here that the Nation has acquired so much gold that its vault had to be enlarged to include the burial place of the old grandmother, but the extension of the boundaries of Camp Knox have not only encompassed the burial ground, but also the old home where Bersheba Lincoln lived for a time with her youngest son, Thomas, father of the President. This last acquisition makes the second farm in Kentucky, owned by Lincoln's parents, now in possession of the government.

If men rather than money constitute the national treasure, old Hardin County, Kentucky might also be recognized as the Heart of the Nation for the gift of this treasure, because it contains the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln.

Larue County was cut off from Hardin County in 1843 and Hodgenville was made the new county seat. While this division was vigorously opposed, the exponents of the new county were finally successful. The separation was not consummated, however, until the debate drew a humorous classic in the form of a caustic rebuke from one of the opposition, a member of the old family from which Hardin County received its name. It is presented here as printed in *Ben Hardin p. 638.*

"Fellow-citizens, I hear everywhere that there is a decided wish to divide Hardin county, and some, I regret to say, oppose it. Why? I ask, why? fellow-citizens. Look at this end of Hardin. It comes out of the way. It is detached naturally from Hardin. It projects like the toe of a boot; and, fellow-citizens, the toe of that boot ought to be applied to the blunt end of any candidate who opposes this just, proper, and natural division. (Cheers.) Having shown you that this end of the county is thus by nature, and should be divided by law from the other, my next consideration is the county seat. To gentlemen as intelligent as you, and as familiar with the section to be divided off, I need not point out that Hodgenville will be the center of the proposed county; and where, but at the center should the county seat be? (Cheers.) Gentlemen, you have doubtless heard the removal of our State capital spoken of. As it is, it is tucked up in a north corner of the State, where it is about as convenient a situation for the capital of the whole State as Elizabethtown (the county seat of Hardin) is to be the county seat of your proposed new county. The same reasons that induce us to separate this part of the county from the other should make us move the capital. We must move it, and to the center of the State. Now take a map. Kentucky is four hundred and twenty miles long, by about one hundred and forty wide in the center. Now the new county will be on a perpendicular line just seventy miles from the Ohio River, and two hundred and ten from each end of the State, and Hodgenville is the center of the new county. I have thus mathematically demonstrated to you that the State capital should be removed to Hodgenville. (Enthusiastic cheering.) Fellow-citizens, I have been inadvertently led into these questions, but I will proceed farther. In the late war (the war of 1812) Washington City was burned by the British, and why? Because it was our exposed border. The National capital should be removed from the Atlantic coast, and to the center of the Union. Kentucky is the great seal set in the center of our mighty republic, (1843) as you will see by enumerating the surrounding States, and, as I have already shown you that this is the center of Kentucky, it follows that the National capital should be removed to Hodgenville. As some had begun to smell a large Norway by this time, the cheering was not quite so loud. 'Nay,' said the orator, in a burst of enthusiasm, 'Hodgenville is the center of God's glorious and beautiful world?'

" 'How in the devil do you make that out?' said an irritated voice in the crowd.

"The speaker, drawing himself up, and sweeping his forefinger in a grand circle around the horizon, said: 'Look how nice the sky fits down all around!' "

Ben Hardin, who presumably made the above speech, for all his humorous deductions, was apparently a blind prophet. The little log cabin near Hodgenville where Abraham Lincoln was born would become more quickly recognized today by the peoples of many countries than the birthplace of any other character. It is doubtful if there has appeared, since the coming of the Messiah, one who has so truly captured the sympathy of the world masses as the child born at Hodgenville.

MATHER & MATHER
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
HODGENVILLE, KENTUCKY

OTIS M. MATHER
LEWIS H. MATHER

April 2, 1941.

Dr. L. A. Warren,
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Dear Louis:

At the request of the Hardin County Historical Society I have prepared a sketch of my great-grandfather, Richard Mather.

As it includes some items in regard to title of the Lincoln Farm, you may be interested, so I am inclosing a copy. You will see that I do not quite agree with your statements in "Parentage and Childhood of Lincoln" as to the chain of title to the birthplace farm.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Otis M. Mather

RICHARD MATHER.

Richard Mather was a resident of the Barren Run section of Hardin(now LaRue) County from about the year 1803 until his death, twenty years later. According to family tradition, he was a native of Manchester, England. So far as known, he was not related to the colonial family of Mathers in New England, though the immigrant ancestor of the Boston divines, Increase and Cotton, who was also a Richard Mather, was from the same shire or county in England in which the city of Manchester is located. The writer of this sketch has been informed by a resident of Manchester that the name Mather is of common occurrence in that city. It is said to be derived from the Saxon word math, to mow; the name therefore signifying a mower.

In early life the Kentucky Richard Mather was engaged in mercantile pursuits. For several years after coming to America-seven according to one statement and seventeen according to another-he was a merchant and importer in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He may have been a resident of that city at the time he first purchased real estate in Kentucky, in the year 1798. But according to deeds which are recorded in Deed Book "A", Hardin County, he was a resident of New York City in the year 1800. A mortgage by John Dewhurst, "Gentleman", to Richard Mather, "Merchant", of New York City, dated April 26, 1800, securing a debt of $661.00, is on file with the papers in the suit of Mather against Dewhurst, which was instituted in the year 1813 in Hardin County.

Richard Mather came to Kentucky probably about the first of the year 1802, but he did not locate immediately on the lands Hardin County which he had purchased. A deed recorded in the Hardin County Court Clerk's office, dated June 7, 1802, shows that he was then a resident of Scott County, Kentucky. At the time he located in Scott County he was a widower, with one child, a daughter, named Eliza, who became the wife of a man named Clark. This daughter never came to Hardin County to reside. While a resident of Scott County, Richard Mather married his second wife. A deed dated January 2, 1804, recorded in Deed Book "B", page 458, Hardin County,

shows Richard Mather and Mary Mather, his wife, as residents of Hardin County. Owing to the fact that the records of Scott County were destroyed by fire about the year 1835, the date of this second marriage cannot be given; and for the same reason no account can be given of any real estate in Scott County which may have been owned by Richard Mather.

Shortly after his removal to Hardin County, Richard Mather erected a residence on the 15,000-acre tract of land which had been allotted to him in the division with the heirs of John Hood, which division will be mentioned later. This residence was in the edge of the "barrens", near the western end of the 15,000-acre tract, in the immediate vicinity of the settlement now known as "Tanner". Here he spent the remainder of his life. During his lifetime he sold most of the two large boundaries of land to which he had obtained title. As a rule, as in the case of the "Sinking Spring" (Lincoln birthplace) farm, sales were made by "title bond", or contract to convey, written by Richard Mather himself in clear and legible handwriting. From the fact that many purchasers had not paid for their lands at the time of Richard Mather's death, and hence were not then entitled to deeds, many suits were filed in the courts of Hardin, Hart and LaRue counties against his heirs, to obtain deeds to lands for which title bonds were held, and deeds were made by commissioners of the courts.

The death of Richard Mather occurred on the 17th day of April, 1823. He was buried in the family burying ground a short distance back of his home. His wife, Mary, survived until May 7, 1848, and was buried by his side.

The children of this couple were six, namely-

(1) Mariah-born September 18, 1804, died May 8, 1863-married Samuel Brashear;

(2) Henry-born 1807; died 1846, while holding the office of Deputy Sheriff of LaRue County under the first Sheriff of the county-married Lucretia Walters;

(3) James C.-married Nancy McIntire;

(4) Edward L.-Married-Died in Wellington, Kansas, about 1884;

(5) Cary-born 1812, died about 1875-married Allen Kirkpatrick;

(6) Ann Gabriella-born March 6, 1815, died September 3, 1877-married William T. Lewis.

The appraisement of the personal estate, of Richard Mather, dated January 23, 1824, and recorded in the office of the Clerk of Hardin County Court, was made by ~~five~~ four of his near neighbors, namely, Thomas T. Owsley, Ellsworth Owsley, Nathaniel Catlett and William Morrison.

The historic interest which in recent years has been attracted to a portion of the real estate in Kentucky to which Richard Mather acquired title warrants special mention of his lands in Hardin County.

On the 20th day of February, 1786, William Greenough, of the city of Philadelphia, obtained patents from the Commonwealth of Virginia for two large boundaries of land lying in that part of Jefferson County which in the year 1793 became Hardin County. One of these boundaries contained 30,000 acres and was described as located "on the southern branches of Nolin"; the other contained 60,000 acres lying in the headwaters of the southern branches of Nolin, Brush Creek and Lynn Camp. These two boundaries were several miles apart. The greater part of the 60,000 acre tract is within the present boundaries of Hart and Green counties, while the 30,000-acre tract is wholly within the county of LaRue.

On the 29th day of July, 1786, Greenough conveyed a one-half interest in the 30,000-acre tract to John Reed and the other half interest to Joseph James, "of the city of New York". On the 11th of June, 1798, James sold his half interest in this tract to Richard Mather.

On the 15th day of June, 1786, William Greenough sold to John Newhurst, of New York City, 30,000 acres, or one-half, of the 60,000-acre boundary; and on October 1[illegible], 1791, Newhurst sold to William Weymouth, who, on the 23rd day of December, 1802, sold this 30,000 acres, lying on the southern branches of Nolin, Brush Creek and Lynn Camp, to Richard Mather and George Johnson. By deed

which was recorded in the office of the Clerk of Hardin County Court on January 20, 1820, the heirs of William Greenough, by Samuel Haycraft, Jr., as Commissioner, conveyed to Richard Mather the whole of the 30,000 acres "on head of the southern branches of Nolin, Brush Creek and Lynn Camp", pursuant to terms of the title bond given by Greenough to Dewhurst on June 15, 1786, of which it would appear Mather had become sole holder. Further account of changes of title of this tract of 30,000 acres is unnecessary; but the 30,000 acres "on the southern branches of Nolin", in which Richard Mather obtained a one-half interest by purchase from Joseph James on June 11, 1798, as stated above, is especially interesting, because out of the 15,000 acres which was later allotted to Richard Mather as his share of this 30,000-acre boundary the farm was carved on which Abraham Lincoln was born. Also, the Richard Creal farm, on Beaver Dam branch of the South Fork of Nolin, near the present town of Buffalo, which was the birthplace of Dennis Hanks, Lincoln's second cousin, was a part of Mather's share of this 30,000-acre tract. The traditional "plum orchard", in which Thomas Lincoln is said to have lived from about May, 1808, until he purchased the "Sinking Spring" place, in December following, which is said to have been the property of George Brownfield at that time, was probably identical with the "peach orchard" on the Creal place, where Dennis Hanks was born. As shown below, George Brownfield later purchased a portion of the Creal place, but not until after the birth of Abraham Lincoln.

In proceedings which were instituted by Richard Mather in the year 1801, in the Hardin County Court, commissioners were appointed to divide the 30,000 acre tract lying on the southern branches of Nolin between Mather and the heirs of John Hood. In 1802 these commissioners run a division line and Mather was allotted the northern half, 15,000 acres; but deed was not made to him until 1817. This deed is recorded in Deed Book ~~No~~ "F", page 172, Hardin County. In a suit which was filed by the representatives of Hood, and was appealed to the Court of Appeals of Kentucky, this

deed was held to be void, as ~~deed/was~~ appears from judgment of the Court of Appeals in 2 A.K.Marshall's Reports, page 875 (decided October 17, 1820). But, as shown by deed of Richard Mather and wife of date October 1, 1821, recorded in Hardin County Court Clerk's office in Deed Book ~~No.~~ "H", page 206, the division as made by the commissioners was ratified and approved, and the titles of purchasers from Richard Mather of various portions of the 15,000 acres which had been allotted to him were validated. Among these purchasers ~~were~~ was Richard Crell, whose tract contained 100 acres, of which a portion was sold to George Brownfield on July 5, 1810, though Brownfield did not obtain a deed until the year 1836, as shown by deed recorded in "Circuit Court Deed Book No.2", page 368, Hardin County. Another purchaser from Mather was David Vance, who obtained title bond for the 300 acres known as the "Sinking Spring" place, which bond he assigned to Isaac Rush, who transferred his rights to Thomas Lincoln in December, 1808. On the "Sinking Spring" place Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth President of the United States, was born February 12, 1809.

(Written by O. M. Pratt for Hardin County Historical Society, Apr. 2, 1941.)

April 17, 1941

Mr. O. M. Mather
Hodgenville, Ky.

My dear Mr. Mather:

I am very much pleased indeed to have your monograph on Richard Mather and I am very sure that where there is any difference of opinion or difference of record between my statements and your articles that you are most certainly in the right.

I do hope that the Hardin County Historical Society will have the article printed sothat it may be available to all. With kindest regards to your family, I am

Very truly yours,

LAW:BST

Director

VIEW OF ROCK SPRING FARM, WHERE PRESIDENT LINCOLN WAS BORN.

From a photograph taken in September, 1895, for this biography. The house in which Lincoln was born is seen to the right, in the background. Rock Spring is in a hollow, under a clump of trees, in the left centre of the picture.

ROCK SPRING ON THE FARM WHERE LINCOLN WAS BORN.

From a photograph taken in September, 1895, for this biography. The spring is in a hollow at the foot of the gentle slope on the top of which the house stands.

Elizabethtown News
Elizabethtown, Kentucky
December 12, 1963

JONES

IF (1) THE NEWS HAS ITS HISTORY straight and (2) this newspaper has any capacity to evaluate news then it thinks an item which appeared in a somewhat obscure page in the daily press last week was considerably down-graded.

Richard Lloyd Jones, founder of a newspaper in Tulsa, Okla., died in that city at the age of 90 years.

The name of Richard Lloyd Jones is like a voice from the past. It was Richard Lloyd Jones, who bought Lincoln Farm in 1905 at public auction held in Hodgenville. This same man, who The News believes was either the editor or publisher of Collier's Weekly at the time, then raised $400,000 through small subscriptions and erected on the farm a memorial to the martyred President, who was born there.

There has also been published an interesting story about the sale. Perhaps the files of Larue Herald, published at Hodgenville, would determine if it is true. The authority on the matter was a man who lived many years afterwards but recently passed on.

The sale of the Lincoln birthplace was under court judgment, the Master Commissioner of the Larue Circuit Court at the time was L. B. Handley, a Hodgenville attorney at the time, and later Circuit Judge of the district. The story is that a large distillery company despatched a representative to the sale to buy the property "at any price," the purpose being to utilize it, if it could be legalized, in the production of "Lincoln Spring" whiskey. Legend has it that the representative spent the night before in an Elizabethtown hotel, where he overslept and rushing as fast as a horse would carry him arrived at Hodgenville only seconds after the property was knocked off to Mr. Jones.

The NEWS believes this story should either be substantiated in fact or repudiated and also hopes that some responsible source will publish in detail the part that Richard Lloyd Jones, lately deceased, had in the establishment of Lincoln Farm as a national shrine.

THE LAST JOURNEY OF THE LINCOLN CABIN

LONG before Lincoln became President of the United States, and before his fame had reached his old home town in Kentucky, the little log cabin in which he was born had been removed from the little knoll on the Rock Spring Farm, where the Lincolns had lived, to a farm a mile down the road. After the son of Nancy Hanks became the tenant of the White House, and the old log cabin came to possess a real historical significance, it was replaced upon the spot where Lincoln once knew it as a boy. Years later it was bought and taken away by a showman and exhibited at various world's fairs and exhibition places. When, less than five months ago, the Lincoln Farm Association was organized to make a national park of the little Kentucky farm upon which the great War President was born, it took upon itself, as its first duty, the restoration of this little cabin, which was found stored in the cellar of a private dwelling at College Point, on Long Island, New York. It was at once moved to a storage warehouse, where it would at least be protected from all harm until this newly organized patriotic association had perfected its elaborate plans, and the old farm on Nolan Creek was ready to receive back its one-time familiar logs. While thus in waiting, the people of Kentucky, who have just closed a notable Old Home Week celebration, urged the Lincoln Farm Association to loan to the sons and daughters of Daniel Boone's commonwealth the first home of Kentucky's greatest son. No sooner was the request granted than railroads began to bid for the honor of carrying the historic cabin on its last long journey. The privilege was granted to the Pennsylvania Railroad, which carried the little edifice back to its native State free of cost, and the Wanamaker store of New York decorated the car in the national colors, as its contribution to the silent messenger of national unity and good-will. The Governor of Kentucky detailed an officer and four militiamen to escort the cabin through with safety, and on Wednesday afternoon, June 6, the home-going of the rude little pile of logs began. Before midnight the car had left the freight yards of Jersey City; in the first break of day its bunting streamers waved through Trenton, and when the sun rose over the Delaware, the Lincoln birthplace cabin, guarded by Kentucky soldiers, rested in the city of brotherly love, the home of the Liberty Bell, the Betsy Ross Cottage, and Independence Hall.

At eleven o'clock Mayor Weaver of Philadelphia addressed the throng that had gathered to see the logs, whose wounds, inflicted by time and the elements, were bound up in the Stars and Stripes. All day long the citizens of Pennsylvania's metropolis came and went paying tribute to the humble home of the first American.

At daybreak on the following day the car was in Baltimore, the city which forty-five years ago was so hostile toward the master patriot it is so proud to honor to-day. The Governor of Maryland sent a despatch of greeting, and in the afternoon of that day the mayor of the city and Congressman Schirm of Baltimore paid eloquent tribute to Lincoln's memory in addresses made from the car to the Old Guard of Baltimore and several thousand citizens who had gathered to see the little home from whence the great Emancipator came.

During Saturday the car visited Harrisburg and Altoona. At Pennsylvania's capital city it was met with military honors, and many short addresses were made by prominent State officials. At Altoona the school-children of the city placed flowers on the car.

Honored by the Grand Army at Pittsburg

All day Sunday the car rested in Pittsburg, and all day the people came and went, many asking the soldiers on guard for the privilege of touching the time-worn logs. At half-past two in the afternoon simple but impressive exercises were held. The chaplain of the Allegheny post of the Grand Army of the Republic, having charge of the meeting, made a short address introducing Mayor Guthrie, who welcomed the relic on behalf of the city. He spoke at length on the cabin's great historical significance and of the civic inspiration it would be to the American people for all time to come. It was, he declared, a symbol of the democracy which has been the fountain source of our national strength. He was followed by Mr. Ashworth, the Government pension agent of Pittsburg, who told the purposes and aims of the Lincoln Farm Association. The public exercises in the steel city closed by the singing of "America" and the firing of a military salute.

On the day following the school-children of Columbus, led by the Mayor of Ohio's capital city, marched to the Pennsylvania depot to meet the humble cabin guarded by the little squad of Kentucky militiamen. Both Mayor Badger and Superintendent of Schools Schawan made stirring addresses, and the school-children sang patriotic songs, concluding with "My Old Kentucky Home" and "America."

At Indianapolis similar exercises were held, and from there the car was taken to Louisville, where it was welcomed with military honors. The cabin was at once taken to Central Park, where it was set up and remained under a military guard during the week.

Saturday afternoon, June 16, had been set apart for the public exercises which were to welcome back to Kentucky soil the sacred logs, which never again should be compelled to serve the sordid interests of a showman's enterprise.

Several thousand people had gathered in the Central Park of Louisville when at four o'clock of that day former Vice-President Stevenson spoke for the State of

Illinois. He was followed by Colonel Henry Watterson, who was introduced by Mr. Breckenridge Castleman as "the greatest living student on the life of Lincoln."

"We are here," said Colonel Watterson, "to pay fitting homage to a rude pile of unhewn logs. What might have been in the minds of those poor, honest yeomen who a hundred years ago hewed those logs, if they had been told that within a century they would constitute holy ground, that they would be taken throughout the country, to arouse not only the deepest enthusiasm, but the warmest reverence and love?

"The direst blow directed against the South after Appomattox was the assassin's bullet which struck down Lincoln. By it the whole current of its history was changed. No custodian of absolute power ever exercised it so benignly. He was not merely great in brain and greater in heart, but he possessed the genius of common sense, common sense in thought and act, enriched by a broad experience.

"I have always believed that, with each of the world's immortals, Lincoln was raised up by God and inspired by God to do the work God had appointed for him to do. From Cæsar to Bismarck and Gladstone the world has seen brilliant soldiers and statesmen rising to place and honor step by step, following the laws of cause and effect. Though their lives may have been crowded with adventure and incident, they can not be called men of destiny. Their lives are clear, comprehensive, and comprehensible.

"The men of destiny rose from shadow and went in mist. There is no explanation for their lives. We hear them, but we know them not. They came, with no word upon their lips, did their work, with God's mantle about them, and left the world half mortal and half mist. They were creatures of a special providence, and were endowed with power to defy the wiles of the world, the flesh, and the devil, until their work was done, then vanishing as mysteriously as they had come.

"Judged by this standard, Lincoln's life might have been chanted by a Greek chorus, the prelude and epilogue to a great crisis. He was born in a hovel, as poor and lowly as the birthplace of the Son of God. Yet it was reserved for this strange being, late in life, to be snatched from obscurity and raised to supreme command, and given charge of the destinies of the nation. Accomplished statesmen were led to the rear, while this fantastic man was led to the front and given the reins. During four years he was given such responsibility as was never known to the world before.

"He was inspired by God, for nowhere else could he have acquired that wisdom and virtue. Where did Shakespeare get his genius, Mozart his music? Who wrote the lyre of the Scotch peasant? As God raised up and inspired them, so did He Lincoln. When thousand years hence the truth of history shall have left no room to doubt, no drama will be followed with deeper feeling than that which tells the story of his life and death. God laid His hands upon these rough hewn logs, and they brought forth a nation's hero."

BIRTHPLACE
FARM AND CABIN

DRAWER 11

BIRTHPLACE CABIN